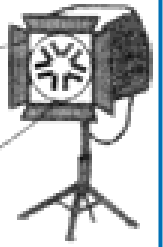




DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA OFFICE ON AGING

Spotlight On Aging



VOLUME XVIII, ISSUE 9

A newsletter for D.C. Seniors

September 2003

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



By E. Veronica Pace

September is here, and the summer has been mild this year. Let's see what the next few weeks have to offer.

Seniors on fixed incomes find it hard to maintain their usual standard of living after retirement. The

Legal Counsel for the Elderly, funded by the Office on Aging and AARP, is here to help those who are victims of the tax sale held in July by the Office of Tax and Revenue. Call today to find out more information.

Seniors also have become the victim of problems as a result of excessive gambling. Gambling can be an enjoyable outlet for seniors. But as with any activity, you must gamble responsibly.

Know your limits. Take only the money that you can afford to lose, and enjoy spending time with your friends and playing the slots or bingo. Do not view gambling as a way to help pay your bills. You might win that jackpot, but if you lose, your bills go unpaid.

Don't take the fun out of gambling — you might lose more than you can handle. If you feel that you have a problem, seek help through the hotline number provided.

Find out more about two walks scheduled for this month. The BODYWISE "Walk 'Round the World" is set for September 20. Find out more about the embassies on Embassy Row while supporting a great senior fitness program.

The Alzheimer's Memory Walk is scheduled for September 27, and the proceeds from the walk will benefit the Alzheimer's Association and caregivers in the District. The Office on Aging is partnering with both groups on these events.

Mark Your Calendar!

Citizen Summit III

"Real Problems. Real Choices."

November 1, 2003

New Washington Convention Center

HELP FOR SENIOR GAMBLERS

Seniors are gambling more, and the impacts of gambling problems may be magnified in this population, according to the National Council on Problem Gambling. The organization has a national hotline number that gamblers or their friends and relatives can call if they worry their gambling is excessive.

The council reports that in a recent study of 7,000 seniors, bingo ranked as the number one form of entertainment, followed by casinos. Both surpassed all other categories, including going to movies and plays, going out to lunch with friends, shopping or playing golf.

Many casinos target seniors for group trips by sending a bus, providing free buffets, cash rebates, etc. This group often is not working during the week and seniors can visit the casinos during the week when younger people are working.

The council also reports that gambling participation is lowest among adults 65+. But while seniors may be less likely than younger adults to gamble in the past year, seniors who do gamble do so more often than others. Of gamblers between 50 and 64 years old, 21 percent report they gamble weekly; 19 percent of those 65 and older gamble weekly.

Advocates have expressed concerns about senior gambling based on seniors' fixed incomes, social isolation, and declining health. For example, a survey commissioned by the National Council on Problem Gambling examined calls from seniors to

problem gambling help lines in seven different states (Arizona, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Louisiana, and New Jersey). All states reported that a significant number of their phone calls came from elders, and individual states reported dramatic increases in senior calls.

"I lost all my money, but I had fun," stated a 65-year-old-casual gambler after returning from an area casino. She added that she only took what she could afford to lose in the slot machines, which she enjoys playing.

"The vast majority of people are able to gamble without significant negative consequences. But for those who can't, gambling can become a problem just like alcoholism," said Keith Whyte, executive director of the National Council on Problem Gambling.

Callers to the council's hotline are given referrals to self-help groups like Gambler's Anonymous and to therapists experienced in dealing with persons with gambling problems.

The National Council on Problem Gambling plans to partner with the D.C. Lottery with a local hotline number. Until then, call (800) 522-4700 to reach the national hotline. You may also access the council on the Web at www.ncpgambling.org.

Are one or more of the statements below true about yourself or someone you know? If so, con-

See **GAMBLING**
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Mayor Anthony A. Williams on a recent visit to St. Mary's Court, a senior residence and Office on Aging nutrition center.



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

ANTHONY A. WILLIAMS, MAYOR

D.C. OFFICE ON AGING NEWSLETTER

Community Calendar

September events

8th • 1 p.m.

HIV and AIDS in Older Americans. A greater number of older Americans have been affected by HIV and AIDS. Come to this workshop to find out how this disease has impacted the community and what steps can be taken to decrease the spread of AIDS. This is a free event, hosted by Senior Citizens Counseling and Delivery Service center, 2451 Good Hope Rd., S.E. For details, call 202-678-2800.

10th • 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Social Security Town Hall meeting. The Social Security Administration will address Social Security updates and changes, Medicare Parts A and B and other related issues. Individuals who register by Sept. 5th will receive a free lunch. For reservations, call the Senior Citizens Counseling and Delivery Service center, 2451 Good Hope Rd., S.E., 202-678-2800.

12th • 9 a.m.

"Grandparents are Grand!" Fishing at Arundel on the Bay. In observance of Grandparent's Day, seniors will ride the bus to Anne Arundel, MD and drop a line from the pier. Enjoy lunch and return to the Phillip T. Johnson Senior Center, 3200 S St., S.E. For details, call Robinette at 202-584-4431.

12th • 10 a.m. to noon

Learn about a variety of flowering plants with EOFULA Spanish Senior Center. They will be visiting the Botanical Gardens. For details, call 202-483-5800.

15th • 1 to 2 p.m.

In a workshop entitled, "What is Incontinence and How is it Treated?" a geriatrician will focus on the causes and the emotional effects of incontinence on seniors. In addition, the most up-to-date treatments will be discussed. This free workshop is being hosted by Senior Citizens Counseling and Delivery Service center, 2451 Good Hope Rd., S.E., 202-678-2800.

15th • 1 p.m.

Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month with EOFULA Spanish Senior Center! They will be celebrating Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Mexico ancestry, heritage and independence. For details, go to 1844 Columbia Rd., N.W., Suite C-1 or call 202-483-5800.

16th • 1 to 2 p.m.

It's "Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day" at Model Cities Senior Wellness Center. This event is being sponsored by the D.C. Department of Health. For information, call 202-635-1900 or 800-444-6472. www.healthgap.omhrc.gov.

17th • 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Model Cities Senior Wellness Center invites you to celebrate Community Health Day. There will be exhibits and health information, as well as health screenings to check vision, glucose, blood pressure, body fat, HIV, prostate, cholesterol and more. There will also be presentations, seminars, massages, door prizes and giveaways. Held in partnership with Howard University Hospital, D.C. Department of Health, Providence Hospital, D.C. Fire Department & EMS, American Cancer Society, Arthritis Foundation, Kaiser Permanente and Metro Cardiovascular Center. For information and directions, call 202-635-1900, 1901 Evarts Street, N.E.

17th • 1 to 2 p.m.

Senior Citizens Counseling and Delivery Service center, 2451 Good Hope Rd., S.E., is hosting "Talk to a Podiatrist Day." Don't neglect your feet any longer. Find out ways to treat common and not so common foot ailments, in addition to a special focus on diabetic foot care. For information, call 202-678-2800.

18th • 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Enjoy a fun-filled day at the Charles Town races with Senior Citizens Counseling and Delivery Service center. Play the slots, enjoy lunch on your own and more. \$15. Bus leaves the center, 2451 Good Hope Rd., S.E. Call to reserve your seat, 202-678-2800.

19th • 10:30 a.m.

"Who will she be?" That is the question everyone is asking! Come to the Miss EOFULA Election Day. For details or how to participate, call 202-483-5800.

Early October events

October 2nd • 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Travel with Senior Citizens Counseling and Delivery Service center to the Three Little Bakers Dinner Theatre in Wilmington, Del. to see the musical stage show, "Footloose." Cost: \$75, includes round trip transportation, an all-you-can-eat buffet and tickets to

the show. Bus departs from the center, 2451 Good Hope Rd., S.E. To reserve your seat, call 202-678-2800.

October 3rd • 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

What better way to spend a fall afternoon than with a picnic at the National Zoo! EOFULA is heading that way, so why not join them? Have a lunch among the wild and exotic animals of our planet with friends. For details, call 202-483-5800.

Ongoing

Tuesdays • 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.

Come to the Model Cities Senior Wellness Center, 1900 Evarts St., N.E., and learn sign language. This 12-week class is held every Tuesday in partnership with the Martin Luther King Library. For details, call 202-635-1900.

Wednesdays • 12:30 to 2 p.m.

Share resources, experiences, concerns and fears in this support group for caregivers of people with moderate to advanced Alzheimer's Disease. No fee, but donations are requested at IONA, 4125 Albemarle St., NW. For more information contact Ruth Chertkov at 301-585-3436.

Thursdays • 1 to 2:30 p.m.

Model Cities Senior Wellness Center is getting artistic! Learn how to make Mah Jongg tiles at 1901 Evarts St., N.E., with others from the area. For more information, call Theresa or Eugene at 202-635-1900.

Thursdays • 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

"Coping with Memory Loss" support group at IONA, 4125 Albemarle St., N.W. This group offers support to seniors with memory loss. Members discuss the impact of memory loss on themselves and their loved ones. For more information, contact Cheryl Shreiner at 202-895-9478 or cshreiner@iona.org.

Fridays • 11 a.m. to noon

The Parkinson's Disease Support Group at IONA, 4125 Albemarle St., N.W., offers an opportunity to share concerns, challenges and losses associated with this chronic disease. No fee, but donations are requested. Contact Deborah Rubenstein at 202-895-0249 or DRubenst@iona.org for more information.

GAMBLING

From page 47

sider calling the hotline. The service is free and confidential.

1. You have often gambled longer than you had planned.
2. You have often gambled until your last dollar was gone.
3. Thoughts of gambling have caused you to lose sleep.
4. You have used your income or savings to gamble while letting bills go unpaid.
5. You have made repeated, unsuccessful attempts to stop gambling.
6. You have broken the law or considered breaking the law to finance your gambling.
7. You have borrowed money to finance your gambling.
8. You have felt depressed or suicidal because of your gambling losses.
9. You have been remorseful after gambling.
10. You have gambled to get money to meet your financial obligations.

Developmental Disabilities and the Aging

Problems faced by elderly individuals with physical disabilities and their caregivers

University of the District of Columbia Institute of Gerontology presents
The Fourteenth Annual Caregivers Conference
September 19, 2003 • 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

4200 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Building 41, Room A03
The conference is free and lunch will be provided at no cost for D.C. residents.
All caregivers, care receivers and mental health professionals are welcome.

Call 202-274-6592 to register. 0.6 CEUs available for \$9.

D.C. OFFICE ON AGING NEWSLETTER

Don't Lose Your Home to a Property Tax Sale

By Deniece Fields, Esq. & Wan Chen

In July, the District of Columbia once again held its annual real property "tax sale." D.C. auctioned off more than a thousand properties — many at a fraction of their market value — because the owners were delinquent in paying their real property taxes.

Over the past six years, the AARP Legal Counsel for the Elderly (LCE) has been working with indigent, elderly clients whose homes were either in jeopardy of being sold, or had been sold, at tax sales.

LCE — which is supported by AARP, the D.C. Office on Aging, the Administration on Aging, the D.C. Bar Foundation and private contributions — has helped these clients apply for property tax relief, challenge unfair property assessments and take other steps to repay property taxes.

Two programs that have been invaluable to older D.C. homeowners are the Homestead Deduction Program and the Senior Citizen Homestead Tax Relief Program.

Qualifications for the Homestead Deduction

The Homestead Deduction provides tax breaks to residential property owners by reducing the assessed property values prior to applying the residential property tax rate. For the 2003 tax year, the deduction amount is \$30,000. Thus, a qualifying homestead real property assessed at \$230,000 would be

taxed as if the property were valued at \$200,000, as opposed to its actual assessed amount of \$230,000.

A homeowner must apply to receive the Homestead Deduction. To qualify for this benefit, the homeowner must own and occupy the property as his or her principal residence. If the residential property is a multi-dwelling structure, then the deduction is available only if the property contains five or fewer units and the owner's principal residence is one of those units.

The D.C. Office of Tax and Revenue Web site, <http://cfo.dc.gov/services/tax/property/index.shtm>, is an excellent source for homeowners to keep abreast of current homestead qualifying requirements.

Qualifications for Senior Citizen Tax Relief

When a homeowner turns 65 years of age, he or she may file an application for senior citizen property tax relief. This benefit further reduces a qualified senior homeowner's property tax by 50 percent.

As with the Homestead Deduction, a senior homeowner must apply for Senior Citizen Tax Relief status. To qualify:

- The applicant must be 65 or older and own 50 percent or more of the property or cooperative unit;
- The total adjusted gross income of everyone living in the property or cooperative unit, excluding

tenants, must be less than \$100,000 for a calendar year; and

- The property should qualify for the Homestead Deduction (see above).

Qualified seniors will continue to receive tax relief as long as they — and their property — meet the eligibility requirements. The Office of Tax and Revenue (OTR) conducts periodic verification and compliance checks, but each homeowner receiving Senior Citizen Tax Relief is responsible for notifying the agency if eligibility ceases.

The OTR periodically verifies the eligibility status of homeowners receiving the Homestead Deduction and Senior Citizen Tax Relief benefits. OTR sends out reconfirmation notices to these homeowners. Should OTR determine that a homeowner no longer qualifies for the Homestead Deduction and Senior Citizen Tax Relief, the Office would recover the balance of the unpaid taxes plus interest.

Because OTR may not conduct verification annually and because errors do inevitably occur, homeowners should complete and return their reconfirmations promptly. Nevertheless, the best preventive measure is still for every homeowner to proactively reconfirm the eligibility status periodically, regardless of whether OTR has issued a notice. LCE recommends reconfirmation every five years.

The OTR strives to provide excellent service, yet recognizes that it is not infallible, so it works diligently with citizens to resolve tax problems arising from inadvertent errors.

A homeowner who has lost the Homestead Deduction or Senior Citizen Relief status can re-qualify by promptly re-submitting an application along with proof of qualification for each year that the home was disqualified. Personal income tax returns and utility bills from the affected years are good evidence to offer OTR for this purpose.

Anyone with questions about the reconfirmation process or their eligibility for real property tax relief should call OTR's Customer Service Telephone Information Center at (202) 727-4TAX, x. 4829.

AARP's Legal Counsel for the Elderly is ready to guide and assist eligible elderly clients through this process. Senior citizens can contact AARP Legal Counsel for the Elderly at 202-434-2120.

Winners of the International Latin American Grandmother Pageant held recently at UDC are Ms. Latin International Grandmother Amanda D. Leon (representing Guatemala) and Ms. World Grandmother Berta Gonzales (representing Colombia). Not pictured Ms. Congeniality Salome Nunez, representing Argentina.



Alzheimer's Association Memory Walk — District of Columbia Saturday, September 27

American Psychological Association
750 First St., N.E.

(take the Red Line to Union Station)

- 9 a.m.** Registration, welcome and warm-up
10 a.m. 5K and 1 mile fun walk
11 a.m. Music, food and entertainment by local jazz singers and bands, along with exhibits by sponsors

Form your own team or walk as an individual. Proceeds will help District families and caregivers coping with Alzheimer's disease.

For more information,
call (800) 728-9255
or visit www.alz-nca.org.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Are you 55 or older? Give a child the gift of knowledge by volunteering with Experience Corps. Join committed men and women who tutor and mentor students in public schools throughout Washington.

Call Experience Corps
202-797-1150

SPOTLIGHT ON AGING

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Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination which is prohibited by the Act. In addition, harassment based on any of the above protected categories is prohibited by the Act. Discrimination in violation of the Act will not be tolerated. Violators will be subjected to disciplinary action.

D.C. OFFICE ON AGING NEWSLETTER

BODYWISE

"WALK 'ROUND THE WORLD"

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2003

AT UDC'S VAN NESS CAMPUS

Honoring the Memory of Roland B. Tolson & Rupert Clark, Sr.

The **BODYWISE** Advisory Board, representing this senior fitness and health promotion program serving older Washingtonians across the District, is sponsoring a "Walk 'Round the World," starting from UDC's Dennard Plaza at 10 a.m., program ending approximately at noon on Saturday, September 20, 2003 (walkers should arrive by 9:30 a.m.). We'll walk through and around the adjacent United States Department of State International Chancery Center, currently comprised of 15 embassies and chanceries of countries 'Round the World. The D.C. Office on Aging, the Commission on Aging, D.C. Department of Recreation, IONA Senior Services, D.C. Department of Health, AARP and the University of the District of Columbia will join in sponsoring this 4th Annual "Walk 'Round the World."

Each group of 10 to 15 walkers will be led by a volunteer-docent, who will identify and comment on embassies along the walk route. Registered walkers will have three options:

- The Walk toward the Singapore Embassy
- The Walk toward the new Embassy of Pakistan
- Hanging out on Dennard Plaza to welcome walkers as they finish, with upbeat music and refreshments

Registration will be \$15 per entrant (*includes a free T-shirt*). Registration form is below. Please make checks or money orders payable to **BODYWISE INC.** This tax-deductible fundraiser will help to support and expand the **BODYWISE Sr. Fitness and Health Promotion Program.**

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PHONE (202) 274-6697 or (202) 274-6651 • Jim O'Donnell, Walk Coordinator, tel. (202) 362-3371
FREE PARKING!!! UDC Parking Garage or Take Red Line Metro to Van Ness -UDC

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN

Please read carefully before completing. Print clearly; make checks and money order payable to **BODYWISE Inc.** Mail to the University of the District of Columbia, Institute of Gerontology, MB#5103, 4200 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20008, Attn: **BODYWISE Program**. One registrant per application. This application can be duplicated for additional registrations.

Name: _____

Address: _____ Apt _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Age as of September 20, 2003 _____

Sex: _____ Phone: _____

Payment (\$15): check #: _____ money order #: _____

I am unable to attend. Enclosed is a donation to support the **BODYWISE Program** in the amount of \$ _____.

WAIVER

I, _____ represent that I am in good physical condition and health and able to complete the BODYWISE Walk I choose for September 20, 2003. I waive all claims against the Walk Committee, the University of the District of Columbia, BODYWISE, Senior Service Network of DCOA and all other entities, officials, and volunteers for any injuries, accident, illness, death or any other claims occurring during or by reason of this walk. Further, I hereby give the BODYWISE Walk Committee and/or its agents permission to use any photographs, video tapes, or interviews of/with me during this event for the sole purpose of compiling documentation for future activities sponsored by the Committee.

Signature _____ Date _____
(Parent's or legal guardian's signature if under age 18)

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PHONE (202) 274-6697 or (202) 274-6651